5. **Legislation.**—The legislative business transacted during the year is given in detail in the report. I would here specifically refer only to the Marumakkathayam Bill, as this was the subject of considerable discussion at the last Session of the Assembly. You may remember that, in closing the last Session, I assured the Nair Members of the Assembly that the representations made by them on the subject would receive careful consideration. Since then, a Committee, consisting of officials and non-officials belonging to the Nair community, considered those representations and recast the Bill, which was then introduced into the Council. The Council affirmed the principle of the Bill and referred it to a Select Committee. The latter having, in due course, reported on the Bill, the report was considered by the Council recently at two special sittings, and the Bill now awaits final reading. In some respects, the Bill, as finally shaped by the Council, differs from the legislation originally proposed, the changes being, however, mostly intended to meet the wishes of those who felt that, while reform was undoubtedly necessary, the original Bill went further in that direction than was needed. To the more go-a-head members of the community, I would point out that, in a matter of social legislation like this, it is the duty of the Government to defer to the wishes *even of a minority objecting to a change*, provided that such minority is not quite an insignificant one. In the opinion of the Government, the Bill, in the form it has now assumed, provides for a very substantial instalment of reform, and we have every reason to think that it will be a perfectly workable measure.

6. **Election to the Legislative Council.**– You are aware that His Highness the Maharajah has been pleased to allow the members of this Assembly to nominate to four of the non-official seats in the Legislative Council. Agreeably to this practice, the Members of the Trivandrum Division will now meet under the presidency of their Dewan Peishkar and nominate, for His Highness' consideration, a person for the seat vacated by Mr. A. Sri Narayanan Tampi in the Council.

7. **Police.**—There was some improvement in the administration of the Police Department, due mainly to the strenuous work of the present Superintendent, Mr. George. A scheme for the reorganisation of the department, submitted by the Superintendent recently, is now pending the consideration of the Government. I would say, on behalf of the Government, that we recognise the great importance of placing the Police Department on a thoroughly satisfactory footing and that we shall not grudge the expenditure necessary for doing so, but I would also point out that successful police work depends quite as much on the active sympathy and co-operation with the Police, of the law-abiding classes of the population, as on the efficiency of the Police themselves.

8. **Criminal and Civil Justice.**—There was nothing noteworthy in the administration of Criminal Justice, to which it is necessary to call your attention. Under the head of Civil Justice, I would refer to the circumstance that the volume of fresh original litigation rose slightly during the year, from 51,312 cases in 1085 to 52,266 cases in 1086. The original civil litigation in the State has been steadily advancing for now several years, but not, however, to the extent which people probably imagine. In comparing the volume of such litigation in any one year with that of any other year, we should not fail to take note of the population as well in the two years. Taking, for example, the ten years' period between 1076 and 1086, it is true that, during this period, the volume of original civil litigation advanced from 37,365 cases to 52,266 cases, but the population of the State also increased during the period from 29,52,157 to 34,28,975

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Taking the volume of original civil litigation *with reference to the population*, there was, in 1086, one suit for 65 persons, whereas in 1076 there was one suit for 79 persons. This represents an increase of about 21 per cent over a period of 10 years. The volume of original civil litigation in Travancore can hardly be deemed excessive when it is compared with that of some of the more advanced British Districts. For example, in 1910, Tanjore had one suit for every 48 persons, and North Malabar one for every 39. Several other Madras Districts were only slightly better than Travancore. Tinnevelly had one suit for every 70 persons. In the Madras city, it was one for 26. The Government do not by any means wish to minimise the evils of litigation, but it has to be remembered that, with the advent of new ideas, the increasing inadaptability of the Maraumakkathayam system of holding property, and the growing complexity of life, *some* increase of litigation is probably inevitable, and it is by no means certain that the increase visible in Travancore during the last ten years is a particularly unhealthy sign. In any case, the Government do not hold with those who are for reducing the facilities open to litigants. The policy of choking off litigation seldom pays in the long run. A large volume of the civil litigation of Travancore is, however, of a petty kind, which it is probably a waste of judicial power to get disposed of even in the lowest of the regular Courts, I mean, the Courts of the Munsiffs. For example, in 1086, out of the 51,617 original suits filed in the Courts of the Munsiffs, so many as 38,004 were suits for the recovery of monies, and of these, so many as 25,471 suits were of a small-cause nature and were for sums of not more than Rs. 50. The Government have felt for some time that it would be probably well if some means could be devised by which petty money suits could be disposed of in the localities where they arose, and with this object in view, it has been resolved—agreeably to the suggestion made by several Members at the last Session—to introduce tentatively the system of Village Panchayats. A Bill is being drafted for the purpose which, it is hoped, will, in due course, become law. The success of the scheme will of course depend, firstly, on the law being a thoroughly workable one, and secondly, on the places tentatively selected being particularly free from those factions and caste and racial antipathies which, in Travancore, as elsewhere, poison public life and seriously handicap the progress of the people.

9. **Registration.**—The number of registration offices remained the same as in the previous year, but the total number of documents registered rose by about 8,000, and the average per office was 3,633. The receipts of the department rose very slightly, by about Rs. 2,000, the expenditure however going up by about Rs. 6,000. The result was that the ratio of the expenditure to the gross income, which had risen from 30 per cent in 1083. to 31 per cent in 1084. and again to 34 per cent in 1085, rose to 35 per cent in 1086. It is in contemplation to increase the number of the offices and to improve the pay of the officers of the department, specially in the lower ranks, and it is anticipated that, as a result of these changes, the ratio of the expenditure to the gross income would still further go up, notwithstanding the revision in the scale of fees recently sanctioned.

10. **The Agricultural Department.**—The Agricultural Department continued to do good work under its capable and enthusiastic Director. One of the most promising signs of the time in Travancore is the increasing interest taken by the people in agricultural matters. The work of the department has, so far, been greatly facilitated and popularised by the co-operation of leading ryots all over the State.

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